



SOUTH PARK INN, INC.

Programs for Homeless Men, Women and Children
Emergency Shelter • Transitional Living • Plimpton House

To: Senator Toni Harp, Representative John Geragosin

And members of the committee

From: Brian Baker, Assistant Director, South Park Inn

December 9, 2009

Dear, Senator Harp and Rep. Geragosin,

I am writing to thank you today for hearing our needs and the needs of other non-profits before you. I am here to speak to you about our work at the South Park Inn. Since 1984 the South Park Inn located at 75 Main St in Hartford has sheltered over 40,000 people. We have an 85 bed shelter for men, women and children, a 33 bed transitional living program for homeless men, and a 35 bed permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless men and women called Plimpton House. We also reach out to the community by providing an unfunded weekly outreach program and a weekly veteran's drop-in center for all homeless or in need veterans. We are committed to the work we do and rely heavily on the community for support.

In fact only 40% of our budget is supplied by State dollars from the Department of Social Services. With the State's help, I have been honored to be a part of this effort for the last twenty five years. We are witnesses to thousand of people getting their lives back together and again becoming productive citizens. It is also a fact that we have never been busier as an essential safety net service. In 2008 South Park Inn was forced to turn away 1046 men, 1041 women and 1069 children.

The fact is we can not afford any cuts in our funding. Due to past State cuts we have already reduced our staff and will be forced to cut services if these reductions are enacted. For years we have virtually been flat funded by the Department of Social Services and have relied on the public sector to help us continue to provide the support we need to continue our mission. We rely heavily on grants and donations from other sources. Unfortunately our costs for fuel, electricity and food are up due to the needs of those we serve. As a twenty four hour facility you do not have the opportunity to conserve in off hours. Our employee health care premiums have also risen 22% this year and we fear donations will fall off as people need to take care of their own basic needs first.

In closing I beg the Committee not to balance the State budget on the backs of Connecticut's homeless, poor, and Connecticut's beleaguered non-profit community. We will continue to proudly serve and provide the basics to our fellow citizens. We will continue to hope that the neediest among us will not have to continue to sleep in cars, abandoned buildings, under bridges, or remain in violent and abusive relationships to keep a roof over their children's heads.